1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

During the festival of Kētrappa at Bēnūr, the Poleyas may not be seen by any high caste villager till the eighteenth day of the festival, but on the eighteenth evening they march in procession with pipe and drum to the Kētrappa temple and watch the ritual from a nearby knoll. They bring offerings of fowls to Kētrappa, and the birds are decapitated by Mēdas, who have an important part in the festival. The Kētrappa festival seems to be an extreme instance of the exclusion of Poleyas. In the festivals of other village-deities they participate to a greater extent, though on a different level from the rest.

Every village has an hereditary headman called *takka*. It is the headman's duty to see that the village greens (*mandus*) where dances and dinners are held, and the village assembly meets, are kept in good condition. He has to ensure that the bridges and ferries in the village are in constant repair and that the village tank is clean. He has to look after pilgrims and travellers passing through the village.

Coorgs have a keen appreciation of leadership and precedence. From their folklore it appears as though they are incapable of conceiving of any group, of no matter what, without a leader. The epithet consistently applied to a headman is '*mūpayanda*' which means 'precedence-having'. A sense of precedence and respect for seniority helped to introduce order into their meetings, just as a respect for precedents produced a consistent body of decisions on any particular matter.

Formerly a headman wielded great influence in his village (or *nāḍ*), and a good headman was a powerful factor for stability. If the headman was a bad man, the entire village was ruined: as a proverb has it, 'when the *takka* is a loafer the entire village is like the area inhabited by Untouchables'. In the management of village affairs and the settlement of village disputes the headman was assisted by an assembly consisting of the representatives of the various *okkas* in the village. The assembly was called *kūṭa*, which means a 'gathering' or 'group'. It met on one of the several greens in the village. There were separate village greens for transacting business (*panchāyati mandu*), for dancing at the harvest festival (*ūr mandu*), a third for dancing at the festival of the village-deity (*dēvara mandu*), and so on. Sometimes there was a roofed enclosure (*ambala*) on the green, which provided shelter from rain and sun for the assembly to meet, and for women to watch the dances.

The village-assemblies were far more powerful in the past than

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

793 decided, that Kávéri should not be allowed to proceed; but
795 the Coorgs declared, that a woman should not be forced to
799 marry against her will. The enraged Agastia Muni pro-
177 nounced a curse upon the Coorgs, that the generation of
539 Coorgs should decrease, that their women should not tie their garments in front, that the sown rice should not grow and that their cows should not give milk. Kávéri Amma who was the patroness of the Coorgs counteracted the curse as well as she could in the following words: "the Coorg shall increase, but the Amma-Codagas decrease; the Coorg women shall tie their garments behind; the sown paddy shall be transplanted and the cows be milked after the calves have drunk." So saying she tried to escape, and on being held by Agastia by the border of her garment, she turned to the right and flowed rapidly away. Hence the place, where this occurred, was called Balamúri (turning to the right). A linga has been [788] erected near the spot by the Brahmins and it is yearly visited in Tulámása at the time of the Kávéri feast by Coorgs and others, who bathe in the river. Dodda-Virájender built here also a rest-house, which, though over 60 years old, is still in tolerable preservation.

The only object this legend can have is, not to clear up the origin of the indigenous priesthood of Coorg, but to obscure and bury it under the rubbish of Puranic lore which eludes every historical investigation.

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7. ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURES AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL REMAINS IN COORG.

a. Palaces.

Besides the *Mercara-Palace*, there are two other Aramanes, one at *Nálknád* and the other in *Halerinád*, but neither is remarkable for extent or elegance. The palace at Nálknád

7 n [Errata: This should read "The Coorgs shall." See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, P. 493 -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

was built by Dodda-Virájender in 1794 and formed in those days an almost inaccessible small mountain-fortress, defended by strong barriers along the steep approaches. Now it is partly turned into the nád Cutcherry and the upper rooms are reserved for visiting Government Officials. In front of the palace near the right corner stands in tolerable preservation a handsome little pavilion (Dáremandappa), which was erected for the celebration of Dodda-Virájender's second marriage with Mahadévamma in February 1796. Under proper management the land belonging to the palace might be turned into fertile and profitable vegetable gardens or other plantations. The palace at Halerinád is built after the plan of other Coorg houses on a larger scale only and secured by breastworks and barriers.

The Palace in Mercara, thoroughly repaired during the last two years and an iron roof put on at an expense of 80,000 Rupees, is a conspicuous building of modern date. According to an inscription on a metal plate in one of the palace-rooms it was commenced on the first day of the new moon of the Bhádrapada month (15th August—15th September) in 1735 of the Sáliváhana era i. e. in 1812 and completed in 2 years and 1 month by Lingarájendra Vodeya, the younger brother of Dodda-Virájender. The inscription concludes: "The pious, who praise Almighty God, by whose grace this "magnificent palace was constructed after the removal of the "rugged hill-top, shall enjoy eternal happiness in this world "and in the world to come."

The ground plan of the palace is that of a Coorg house with a superstructure in European fashion. It forms a large square of 200 feet with an open space in the centre, is 2 stories high and presents a fine front. A range of arches runs nearly along the whole extent of the bottom part, the upper having a contiguous row of windows shut in by glass sashes and venetian blinds, the centre window projecting into a small

[Errata: This should read "Kachéri." see corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 473 - Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

344 balcony supported by two upright horses formed of masonry. Along the ridge of the roof runs a balustrade of ornamental masonry. The other three sides of the building present nearly a blank space varied only by a few irregular apertures to admit air, for they can hardly be called windows. The rooms which have been adapted to European convenience as best they could, are tenanted by the officers of the Native Regiment, stationed at Mercara. The whole palace is built of brick and excellent mortar and altogether finished with solidity and elegance, such as characterise no other modern buildings in Coorg. In one of the lower rooms the strongly secured *Provincial Treasury* is located.

A reception house for English visitors to the late Rajahs formerly stood on the site of the present Government Central School, in the midst of a plantation of orange and other trees. It owed its existence to the gratitude of Dodda-Virájender who had a warm attachment for the English. It was a handsome building in the form of a square with four turrets at the angles and 2 stories high. Both as to architecture and furniture it was executed in European style, and nothing was forgotten, that could render it a comfortable abode to travellers, accustomed to the luxuries of civilized life. It is referred to with high praise in the Memoranda of English visitors in those days. With the advent of the British Government it fell into disuse which did not justify an expensive up-keep, and being abandoned it soon became a ruin, and was demolished, its stones being partly used in the erection of the Central School.

349 **b. Mausoleums.**

The most remarkable modern buildings in Coorg are the *Mausoleums* of *Dodda-Virájender* and *Lingarájender* and their favourite Queens. These edifices are exactly alike and stand close to one another. The first was erected shortly after Virájender's death in 1809 by Lingarájender, and the other

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

349 *Nanjunda Arasu*, who had ruled over Periapatam. Shortly before his death, whilst on a visit to his nephew, the Coorg Rajah Dodda-Vírappa Vodeya, the fortress fell through treachery into the hands of the Mysoreans with the loss of all his remaining family. In his affliction he addressed the Coorg Rajah thus: "As old age had come upon us, we intended with your permission to have placed our son in the Government of Periapatam and, renouncing the desire of this world, to have given ourselves to constant adoration of Siva. At such time of old age the great God has shown us a misery, we ought never to have looked upon. Do you take possession of the country which has passed from our hands? ⅄ Build and give us a house to live in till our life come to a close, and a temple for Vírabhadra, our household god. Besides, it is our mind, to consecrate a Linga in our name. For this purpose let a temple be built on the banks of the Kávéri river, in it a Linga be consecrated in our name after the close of our life, our grave be made in front of that temple, a stone portico be built over it and a Basavéshvara consecrated in it." In compliance with this request Dodda-Vírappa had a palace built near the river on the spot chosen by him at Holesálhalli, surrounding it with a ditch, settled him there and gave it the name Nanjaráyapattana. For his bodyguard he appointed 700 Coorgmen. He built also Vírabhadra's temple, erected another stone temple over the Linga, called Nanjundéshvara, and after Nanjunda's death he laid him in a grave constructed according to his wishes and made a grant of some lands for the perpetual performance of a religious service.

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172 **c. Antique Sepulchres or Cairns and Monumental Stones.**

Cairns, those mysterious prehistoric tumuli, which are found all over the old world from Scandinavia to the far East and which puzzle alike the simple peasant and the astute

⅄ [Errata: This should read "hands." (Period), rather than "hands?". See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 493 — Analyst]